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XXVI.—*The Vlaks of Mount Pindus.* By Major ROBERT STUART, C.B., Her Majesty's Consul in Albania.

[*Read Nov. 26th, 1867.*]

ALTHOUGH no written records exist of the origin and early history of the Pindic Vlaks, there are fair grounds for believing that they are descendants of one or more of those tribes which, in the fifth and several succeeding centuries, were driven from their homes on the Lower Danube by the incursion of overpowering hordes from the north and east. Of their progress westward but little is known, or of the direction they took. But Chalcondylas observes that in his time they were established in all the countries lying between Dacia and Mount Pindus. The time of their arrival in Thessaly is lost in the obscurity of the middle ages: history, however, records that, as early as the tenth century, Greece (including Thessaly) was thickly colonised with mingled tribes of Slavonic and other descent,—which tribes, it may be inferred, were subsequently fused into one people, which, either from identity of pursuits, or from the preponderating admixture of the Dacian element, gradually acquired the common name of Vlaks. If we listen to their boasted legends of Roman descent, their cradle is to be sought, not in Dacia Proper, but in Dacia Aureliana, the name given to the new province in Mœsia, created in the year 270 of the Christian era, when Aurelian, pressed by the Goths and Vandals, withdrew the Roman colonies, planted by Trajan, to the south of the Danube, and made that river the north-east boundary of his empire.

Anna Comnena, writing in the eleventh century, makes mention of Vlakhic villages in Thessaly; and Benjamin of Tudela, describing his progress through Greece, states that, at Lamia, Vlachia begins, a country inhabited by Vlaks. But whence this name of “Vlakh?” Anna Comnena says, “καὶ ὅποσοι τοι νόμαδα βίον εἶλοντο βλάχους τούτους ἢ κοινῇ καλεῖν οἶδε διάλεκτος.” We learn from this only to whom the name was applied, viz., to those who had chosen the nomade life. But in the present instance it more especially refers to the Danubian tribes which were at different periods ejected from their territories, and which flowed in successive waves through the Byzantine dominions in search of settlements. The application of the term, though serving to denote, does not explain its meaning; and one is not to look for aid to the Byzantines in etymological difficulties. In Slavie, *Vlah* means *pastor*; in Magyar, *Vloh*. A close phonetic resemblance would suggest the identity of *Vlakh* with these

kindred words ; which identity is rendered still more probable by reference to the pastoral life of the early Vlaks, and to their long intercourse with both Slaves and Magyars. But, on the other hand, the Vlaks appeal to their name as a proof of their Roman, or at least their Italian, descent ; for, in Polish, the Italians are called *Wloch*, the Vlaks, *Woloch*. In Hungarian, the respective names are, *Olach* and *Oulach* ; and *Wlaschazeme* and *Wolaschazeme* severally express Italy and Vlachia. The designation of shepherd or pastor may have specially been given to the descendants of Trajan's colonies, and subsequently, by a natural extension of time, to their kindred stock, the Italians. In this way the Vlak pedigree is in no wise impeached by tracing their name to the same root as pastor. Leaving the solution of this question to the learned in Slavic dialects, I proceed to observe that the Vlak colonies established in Greece were of sufficient weight to give their names to their adopted countries. The classic name of Thessaly was for ages supplanted by that of *Μεγάλη Βλαχία*, *Megale Blachia*, or Great Blachia ; while *Μικρά Βλαχία*, *Mikra Blachia*, or Little Blachia, designated an extensive district comprising Acarnania and Ætolia. Is it precisely known, I would ask, at what time the name of Vallachia was given to the southern part of ancient Dacia ? We now hear no longer of *Μικρά Βλαχία* ; Thessaly has resumed her ancient title ; and the name "*Ἀνω Βλαχία*, *Ano Blachia*, or Upper Blachia, which, sixty years ago, indicated the northern part of Pindus, has dropped into oblivion.

From the earliest notices of the Vlaks it would appear that, in the course of their migrations, they always established their settlements in rugged mountain regions, difficult of access and easy of defence. Pachymera writes, "*το Βλαχικὸν ἔθνος δυσχωραῖς χαίρον*," and Benjamin of Tudela (Latin translation) "*Hæc est Vlachia initium, cujus incolæ montes incolunt.*" There are sufficient indications, historic or incidental, by which they may be traced in a circle round the great basin of Thessaly, skirting or cresting the ring of mountains which gird that fertile country. The Cambunian heights, and their counterparts south to the Peneus, were occupied by them. They were numerous in Dolopia and Phthiotis. I cannot discover any traces of them on Mount Pelion ; but there is presumptive evidence that they occupied the fine lands at the northern base of Mount Ossa, where the plain of Larissa contracts into the vale of Tempe. They were established on the heights that overlook the Sperchius and the Cephissus, and thence they penetrated through the mountains westward as far as the Lower Achelous. In North Thessaly their chief

towns were Larissa and Tricala ; in Dolopia, Kastania, and in Phthiotis, Armyro on the gulf of Volo.

Between Larissa and the vale of Tempè the distance is spaced at irregular distances by tumuli, of which the present inhabitants can give no account. There are several also near Velestino, the ancient Pheræ ; and one, called by the Turks Pilaf Teppè, commands the pass which leads through the mountains, from the plain of Larissa to the low lands round the gulf of Volo. One or two similar mounds are to be seen between Salonica and the Vardar ; and there are numbers of them, I have been assured, in Thrace. Those in Thessaly are of a regular, conical shape, about thirty feet in height, and very uniform in size and appearance. They follow a given line, and at distances so judged that they should command a sight one of the other. Riding one day in Thessaly with a Polish gentleman of great information and research, we happened to pass one of these mounds, and on calling his attention to it, he remarked that it was the same sort of mound that in the Scythian migrations the leading division used to throw up to indicate the line of march to the following divisions. According to this explanation one may conclude that the Thesalian mounds were erected by the Vlaks on their first passage through the country, in conformity with a custom they had learned from the Scythians in Dacia.

From all the above mentioned places the Vlaks have long since wholly or in part disappeared. Their head quarters are now on the heights of Mount Pindus, between Jumerka and the Haliacmon. Their out-stations dot the northern prolongation of the mountain as far as Lake Ochrida, and extend eastward at long intervals along the Cambunian range as far as the roots of Mount Olympus.

This collapse of a flourishing people resulted from the location of Turkish colonies in Thessaly and Greece, which, following De Hammer (lib. vi, 109), took place in 1397 by order of the Sultan Bajesid. These colonies were gathered from the western parts of Asia Minor, and the name *Koniarides*, which is still applied, though in contempt, to the Turks of Thessaly, indicates Iconium as the place from whence they originally came.*

Although these Turks have long been known as a quiet, in-offensive people, it may well be believed that on their first arrival as Timariotes, they were of a different character : at all

* The name, no doubt, ethnically means natives of Iconium, but to the Greek who uses it it serves to embody a notion of dislike and contempt which may be paralleled in English, supposing we had a secular aversion to the Portuguese, by such a term as *Lousitanian* for Lusitanian ; from *κόνις*, *κόνιδος*, a louse, *nit* (A. S. *hnitu*). [S.]

events the Vlakhs retired before them, and in the silence of history on the subject, and the dimness of tradition, the obvious inference is that, pressed by superior numbers, and reduced perhaps to the condition of Helots, they gradually withdrew from or deserted their settlements, and eventually took refuge in their present rugged fastnesses, their farther retreat being stopped by the fear of conflict with the powerful tribes of Albania. Thus, guided by their mountain instincts, they were enabled to find a home and safety in regions where other people would have perished.

This movement most likely extended over a series of generations, for Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, i, 274, writing in 1805, inclined to the tradition that the Vlakhs had not then been settled more than two hundred and fifty years in Pindus, which would agree very well with the inferences deduced from other known probabilities concerning this people.

Having thus hastily traced the course of the Vlakhs to their present retreats, I now proceed to notice briefly some of their distinguishing habits, their subdivisions, and their general condition and character.

Although it is presumable that they are all descended from the same or nearly the same origin, they were so dispersed in their first wanderings over Pindus in search of homes, and have since been kept so much apart by the natural obstacles to communication, that they have drawn off into separate clans, severally distinguished by name, pursuits, and even by pretended traditions. With the mass of the Vlakhs tradition is singularly blank: they sing no songs or tell no stories of their forefathers' deeds, and they seem to be ignorant and careless of their origin. But, with an excusable vanity, some of their bookmen have endeavoured to fill the void in their history, and not content with a Romano-Dacian origin, they claim a direct descent from the Romans themselves. But these bookmen differ among themselves, and depart, all of them, from historic probability, in tracing the line of descent. For instance, the Vlakhs of the Aspropotamus, it is pretended, are descendants from the wreck of Pompey's army defeated at Pharsalia. For the Malacassites, it is said that their forefathers came direct from Italy, whence they were banished for having taken part with the murderers of Pertinax in A.D. 193; and the Dassaret Vlakhs, who dwell to the south of Lake Ochrida, are, according to the same authority, descended from an Italian or Roman colony planted by an emperor named Maximus in Taulantia (now Musachia), whence they were subsequently driven to the mountains by invading hordes from the north.

I notice these legends merely to dismiss them. At the same time I cannot explain why the Malacassian Vlakhs are

called Bruzzi, or why two of their chief towns should bear the names of Calabrites and Syraku.* The resemblance of these names to Brutii, Calabria, and Syracuse cannot be denied. But in the absence of all historic light on the subject, any attempt at elucidation would only end in increased obscurity.

Discarding then the fabulous, and all that may be treated as recent invention, one is bound at the same time to admit that the claims of the Pindic Vlakh to Roman origin are not merely imaginary. Linguistic affinity furnishes some of the most unerring clues in ethnological researches; and the language of these Vlakh, corrupt though it is, and debased with alloys of Sclavic, Greek, and Turkish, still retains the essential characteristics of a Latin dialect. The Latin words are less numerous than in some of the more finished languages elaborated from the same stock—in part, perhaps, because the ideas to express are less numerous—but the syntax and inflexions of the verbs still conform in a remarkable degree to the ancient model.

Form of head and cast of features are further helps in tracing family identity. I have often been struck with Vlach heads and faces of unquestionably Roman type and mould. But this resemblance does not perhaps argue much, as it may be looked for in every country which was subjugated or colonised by the Romans.

Pouqueville, who studied the statistics and distribution of the Vlakh with more attention than any other modern traveller, classed them as follows in 1815 :—

AUOVLACHIA :—			Families.
Malacassites	...	...	2,465
Aspropotamites	...	...	2,230
Metzovites	...	...	1,870
Zagorites	...	...	1,130
Nomades	...	...	1,200
			8,895
BOMEI OR BOVIENS :—			
Nea Patra	...	...	378
Carpenisi	...	...	981
Zeïtoun	...	...	600
Nomades	...	...	240
			2,199
DASSARETS :—			
Sedentary	...	...	2,900
Nomades	...	...	800
			3,700
Families		...	14,794
			5
Souls		...	73,970

* All accident. *Seráku* means *poor* in Danubian-Wallachian. Kala-

I have transcribed the above classification, although it is no longer applicable to the Pindic Vlaks; but it serves to show their numbers and distribution at a time when their fortunes and condition were still at their zenith. The name 'Ἄνω Βλαχία, *Ano Blachia*, as has already been noticed, has long since fallen into disuse; and the Bomœi or Bovians, whose settlements in Ætolia and Acarnania, went by the name of Μικρὰ Βλαχία, *Mikra Blachia*, have passed from Grecian into Turkish territory, and under the name of Sarakatsani* have established themselves in Agrafa, where Pindus and Othrys unite to form a barrier between the inhospitable regions of Ætolia and the sea-like plains of Thessaly.

The Albanito-Vlachi must not be forgotten in the enumeration of the Vlaks. As their name denotes they are of mingled blood, and, constituting a distinct clan of some two thousand families, they live in tents and pasture their flocks on the mountains and valley plains of Kolonia, about the sources of the Apsus river.

Sixty years ago (Leake i, 274) there were about five hundred Vlakhote villages, none very small, dispersed throughout the mountains of Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia. With the utmost diligence, I believe, it would now be difficult to reckon up half that number; and Pouqueville's 74,000 Vlaks have dwindled in the present day to 45,000 at the outside.

The transition from the pastoral to the agricultural life is slow and against the grain;—to the mercantile, on the contrary, easy, and, I may say, of natural sequence. Once a nomade people settles down, the possession of flocks is, of itself, suggestive of industry and manufactures, without which, milk, wool, hair, and skins would either be perishable or be limited in value to the price of the raw article. To the Vlaks industry and trade were rendered all the more necessary, because in their mountain retreats there was not pasture sufficient for their flocks, nor cultivable land sufficient to supply them with bread. Moreover, in the long imprisonment of winter, when for months the deep-lying snow cut off all communication with the outer world, the Vlakh, accustomed to movement and activity, must needs find employment—a state of utter idleness would have been intolerable to him—and employment, to be attractive, must be useful or profitable. Accordingly we find that in the beginning of the present century, most of the chief

brites should be *kalarîtes*—καλαρρίταις. Bruzzi is unknown to me. It would be the regular Wallachian plural of *brutu*, if that word exist in the language.

* From Saraketsi, one of their former villages in Acarnania.

towns of the Vlaks were flourishing centres of commerce and industry in their several cantons. Those chief towns were then, as well as now—Vlakho-Livadhi, near Mount Olympus ; Voskopolis of the Dessarets ; Metzovo and the twin *bourgades*, Syraku and Calabrites ; all these places merit separate notice, and inverting their order I begin with the last.

Pouqueville had no historic authority for stating that Calabrites dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century. All that is known of its commencement is from tradition ; and tradition, which always plays loosely with dates, is in this case peculiarly liable to suspicion, from the well known vanity of the educated Vlaks, who would certainly strive to add local antiquity to their other claims to admiration. These same gentlemen pretend that the name *Calabrites* derives from *Calabria*, and not from *Καλήβρυσις*, *Calebrysis* (good fountain). The abundance of delicious water with which the place is supplied would certainly suggest and justify the latter derivation. But whatever may be the etymology of the name, Calabrites is situated on the southern slope of Mount Polyanos, at the foot of a bare treeless declivity called *padourè marè* in Vlakh, “the great forest ;” whence it would appear that this declivity was originally thickly wooded, like other parts of the mountain, but in course of time was stripped of its clothing by the ruinous process of burning and felling timber which is still in unchecked operation throughout the Ottoman dominions. In the beginning of the present century Calabrites counted nearly six hundred families, and presented an aspect of prosperity, order, and progress, that contrasted strongly with its desolate situation. This state of things was the result of a long course of industry and enterprise, to which the inhabitants had early devoted themselves, partly led by their own innate energy, partly constrained by the necessities of the place. Their industrious habits brought them into intercourse with their neighbours, amongst whom they sought purchasers for their wares and produce. By degrees they opened a trade with Arta and other towns, their woollen manufactures and fabrics in goat skins got into demand, and they acquired a name for the *φλόκατα*, *phlocata*, still in general wear in these parts, and for the rough *cappa*,* which is in demand, not only throughout Albania, but with the mariners of the Adriatic and as far as Italy and Spain. Gradually extending their relations, towards the middle of last century the Pindic Vlaks had won for themselves a place amongst the foremost merchants of the Levant ; they had counting-houses at all the chief ports of

* More commonly known in English as a *grego*.

Italy, and as far as Cadiz, Vienna, Constantinople, and Moscow. Their foreign trade was carried on under the French flag in Greek vessels; and the shippers of Galaxidhi were their chief carriers. At this time they had acquired considerable skill as gold, silver, and copper-smiths. The Albanians resorted to them for their highly wrought gun and pistol stocks, for sword handles, yataghan sheaths, cartouch boxes, and for the large clasps and other ornaments worn by their women. The manufacture of these articles is still a speciality of the Vlaks in Epirus, and their skill as silversmiths has lately been stimulated by the large and increasing demand for the beautiful ornament known as "the Janina clasp" in the fashionable circles of England, France, and Italy.

But the Vlaks were at this time something more than mere artisans, mechanics, and traders. A taste for letters had grown up amongst them; choice collections of books were to be found in their houses; intercourse with strangers had rendered many of them good linguists;* and as their commercial interests obliged them to study foreign movements with reference to the course of trade, they were consequently well versed in European politics, and could calculate the chances of exchange, and the rise and fall of the funds in the various markets of Europe. The rule of their domestic life was order, cleanliness, and decency; their houses were commodious and were strongly built, to resist the elemental strife of their wintry regions; the community was administered by a municipal council, which framed regulations and assessed taxes independently of all government interference. This privilege of self-government had been secured at an early date by the foresight of the Vlaks of Aspropotamus and Malacass, who, dreading Turkish law and the arbitrary rule of an irresponsible provincial governor, succeeded in placing themselves under the immediate protection of the Validè-Sultan, into whose private chest they annually paid the sum of 2,000 piastres† in quit of all government imposts.

Under this system of self-government, the Calabritiotes arrived at the state of progress and prosperity in which we find them in the early part of the current century. It was then that their fortunes began to wane; an evil eye had long been fastened on them; their wealth and independence had provoked the cupidity and the enmity of Ali Pasha Tepeleni. By combined action the Pindic Vlaks might have resisted that op-

* It should be mentioned that their literary language and culture were Greek, their own language remaining merely oral and uncultivated.

† £168. The piastre was at that time worth about 1s. 8d.

pressor's power, but the pursuits of peaceful commerce had softened their character. They no longer possessed the martial spirit of their nomade fathers; for notwithstanding the strength of their mountain positions, they made no resistance to the spoiler, but meekly resigned their privileges into his hands, and submitted to the exactions he imposed on them. Appeals to their protectress were in vain; indeed, the Pasha contrived to keep her majesty in good humour by carefully respecting her rights, and her annuity was regularly remitted until the standard of revolt was raised in Epirus, and all imperial rights in the province were for a time confiscated.

In 1806 the Calabritiotes were assessed at 45,000 piastres* a-year, and their debt had grown to 150,000 piastres,† for which they were paying 15 per cent. interest. Against these formidable difficulties they patiently struggled until 1815, when a commercial crisis supervening, their embarrassments reached the culminating point, and they succumbed beneath them. It would appear that, tempted by the opportunities arising out of the continental war, they had engaged in speculations to the utmost tension of their capital and credit. These speculations presupposed a longer continuance of the war, and consequently failed on the return of peace.

From that time the Calabritiotes have withdrawn from the wider fields of commerce, and contracting their operations to their available means, they have dwindled down to manufacturers of coarse cloth, to small retailers, and humble tradesmen. Their flocks are tended by paid shepherds chosen from the poor of their own community, and their wives and daughters cultivate their scanty lands. Their municipal debt is still owing, and will never be paid; for, after the crash of 1815,‡ all those who possessed anything fled the country never to return, and but little was to be got from the paupers who remained. Calabrites obligations became therefore waste paper, and many of them are still to be found in Janina, preserved by the descendants of the original holders.

But Calabrites had not yet drained the cup of misfortune. In 1821, when Janina was besieged by the imperial forces, many of the wealthier inhabitants escaped with their money and valuables to Calabrites and Syraku, where they hoped to find shelter until the storm was over. The besiegers were furious on hearing of the removal of so much of their expected booty; a charge of treasonable conspiracy was trumped up against the fugitives and their protectors; a force was detached

* £3,000. † £10,000. At this date the piastre was worth 1s. 4d.

‡ Between forty and fifty families went at this time and settled in Zante.

against them, and Calabrites and Syraku were plundered, sacked, and burnt. All the vestiges of former prosperity were destroyed; the archives and collections of books were tossed into the flames, and nothing was left but piles of ruins to mark the sites of these once flourishing towns. Their names, however, are not lost. The inhabitants who fled on the approach of the enemy, returned on his departure; they must needs provide themselves with houses; their local attachments were strong; the materials were *in situ*; and on the ruins of their former homes they built as many *καλύβαι*, *calybæ*, as they needed, and to the aggregates fondly gave the old names.

In 1820 Calabrites numbered five hundred and thirty houses and Syraku five hundred; the latest census gives to the former one hundred and twenty-eight,* to the latter one hundred and forty-eight.* But the first was sparkling, bright, and gay, grouped into fairy cities that startled the traveller in those mountain solitudes. The present villages are modest enough, and yet one does not come upon them without surprise, so dreary and inhospitable is the surrounding scenery.

Below Calabrites, on the banks of the river that rushes by the foot of the slope, are the scattered remains of an ancient Hellenic town. Some years ago a tomb was discovered among the ruins, and was opened by the villagers, who found in it some silver coins and a short sword blade. The coins were sold to a Vlakh silversmith, who melted them down; and the sword blade to a gipsy blacksmith, who turned it into horse-shoe nails. There is reason to believe that ancient coins used to be found in considerable quantities in this country, but they were all, or most of them, at once consigned to the crucible, and other antiquities were valued and treated merely as old material.

The story of Calabrites is, with slight variation, the story of all or most of the chief towns of the Western Vlakh's. Voskopoli of the Dessarets was founded some time in the latter part of the fifteenth century, and at the beginning of the eighteenth was a flourishing city, with its printing-press, manufactures, foreign trade, and, according to some accounts, from eight to ten thousand houses. Nothing remains of it now but a couple of hundred poor houses inhabited by small retailers, and resorted to chiefly by shepherds. Mussulman envy could not tolerate its prosperity, and Mussulman violence accomplished its ruin. From a flourishing emporium at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was at the beginning of the nineteenth what it still is, a poor hamlet in the midst of the wreck and ruins of its former prosperity.

* Somewhat increased since.

Vlakholivadhō, the chief town of the Cambunian Vlaks, seems to have escaped the spoiler's hand. It is still a thriving village of some nine hundred houses, and is known in the neighbouring markets for the coarse cloths of which capes and flocatas are made.

Metzovo calls for more extended notice. This town, for it really deserves the name, was, according to Pouqueville, founded by a Vlach colony as early as the tenth century. Following the same author, it contained in 1815 1,100 houses; Leake in 1805 set down the number at seven hundred; a more recent unofficial return, at eight hundred and fifty-four; and two years ago I was myself informed by the mudir of the place that the number then was seven hundred and seventy.

The name Metzovo, if derived, as some pretend, from *Μεσῶ Bounōn*, *Meso bounon*, (in the midst of the mountains), aptly suits a place situated in the midst of the lofty heights that group round the northern extremity of Pindus. Here, on the opposite flanks of a profound ravine, through which flows the Pindic branch of the Arta river, are the two *mahalls* into which Metzovo is divided; the one *Προσήλιον*, *Proselion*, is on the right bank, the other, *Ανήλιον*, *Anelion*, is on the left; the first contains six hundred and seventy houses, the second one hundred.

Metzovo is on the great highway between Thessaly and Epirus, one and a quarter *hour* distant from the *ζύγος*, *Zygos*, of Lacmon; its position must, therefore, have at all times assured to it considerable importance, not only as a commanding stronghold, but as a suitable halting-place for the carrying trade. We accordingly find that Metzovo has always occupied an important place in the modern annals of Epirus, and it is now the chief town of the Pindic Vlaks. Leake states that like Calabrites and Syraku, it had secured the special protection of the Validè Sultan—such might have been the case; yet I cannot refrain from relating the popular story which attributes the rise and progress of Metzovo to the following romantic episode.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, a grand vizier, having incurred the displeasure of his master, fled from Constantinople, and found refuge in the hut of a Vlach shepherd of Metzovo. After a few months the tidings of his recall to favour and to the grand vizierite reached him in his concealment. He returned to Constantinople, and his first thought, on being reinstated in power, was to reward the benefactor by whom he had been sheltered when in disgrace. At his invitation, the shepherd proceeded to Constantinople, and was rewarded with an Imperial firman, which guaranteed the following privileges to his native place.

i. That certain specified pastures situated in Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus, should belong *in perpetuo* to the community of Metzovo.

ii. That no Mussulman should settle within the borders of the community.

iii. That the community should pay a fixed sum annually in lieu of all government dues.

iv. That their territory should be an inviolable asylum.

v. That all Mussulmans passing through their territory should regard the ground as sacred, and on quitting it should scrape their horse's hoofs, so as not to take away with them a particle of Metzovo soil.

vi. That their ecclesiastical affairs should be administered by a special exarch from the patriarch.

vii. That in civil matters they should be subject to the nomarch of Euripus in the Eubœa; and in judicial matters to the cadi of Livadia in Bœotia.

This last article, by placing the revising authorities at a distance, was intended to discourage appeals against their own municipal decisions.

These comprehensive privileges were extended to all the dependencies of Metzovo, which were then limited to four villages, situated within a circle of about three *hours* in diameter.

"Se non è vero è ben trovato." The story is at least a pretty one; but it is believed by many and fondly cherished by local vanity. In partial corroboration of it I may mention, that* in 1515 Sinan Pasha, grand vizier of Selim I, fell into disgrace, fled from Constantinople, and remained *perdu* in some unknown retreat until recalled to favour and vizierial dignity.

Admitting under reserve the truth of the story, it would follow that the privileged ground of Metzovo, notwithstanding its rugged character, and the rigour of the climate, soon became a centre of attraction, and from a scattered hamlet rapidly grew into a flourishing town in which Vlach industry and manufactures were stimulated to their fullest development. The inhabitants became wealthy flockmasters: they monopolised the carrier trade over Pindus, and rivalled the people of Calabrites and Voskopolis in woollen manufactures: with few interruptions they continued in the enjoyment of their privileges until the close of the last century, when Ali Pasha, setting at nought Imperial grants and prescriptive rights, destroyed their charter, annulled their prerogatives and immunities, and reduced them to the common level of their neighbours.

* De Hammer, vol. i, lib. xxiii, p. 426.

Whether or not all this is to be believed, Metzovo is now a thriving place. With its five dependent villages it contains about 1,200 families, of whom some are shepherds, some mechanics; but by far the greater number of the men are carriers, who, in the exercise of their calling, traverse every part of Thessaly, Epirus, and Macedonia. They are chiefly dependent for horses and mules upon their cousins of Zagori, who are well known at all the cattle fairs of Western Turkey, and extend their dealings as far as Bosnia, Servia, and Salonica.

A good many Metzovites resort to foreign countries as merchants. Of those who have acquired wealth several have made gifts or bequests to the community for charitable or educational purposes, which yield in the aggregate about £1000 a-year. With this sum, if fairly and judiciously employed, much good might be done; but it is to be feared that the Vlaks, nowadays at least, offer no exception to the general character of municipal trustees in this country.

It is believed that the Vlaks were pagans on their first arrival in Greece and Thessaly: at what time they embraced Christianity has not, that I am aware of, been determined. But for several centuries they have been staunch in their adherence to the Eastern church. Unlike their Albanian neighbours they have resisted the allurements of apostasy to the Moslem creed; and, though well fitted to enter the lists of ambition, they have preferred the cross and humility to the crescent with all its attendant honours. I can find no records of Vlaks having risen to high posts in the Ottoman state, but many of them have become eminent as dignitaries of the eastern church, and have otherwise distinguished themselves in the narrow field open to Christians in Turkey.

Metzovo was formerly in the diocese of Meteora; it is now, with Calabrites and Syraku, included in the archbishopric of Janina. The southern Dessarets are subject to the Bishop of Greveno, the northern to the Bishop of Berat.

The Vlach country is well dotted with monasteries. There are seven in the Jumerka district; the same number in Malacassia, including the monastery of Cossovitsa, about eight hours from Janina, on the road to Metzovo, where there is an annual fair of three days, beginning on the 15th of August, old style. The monasteries in the northern Vlach districts are not less numerous than those in the south.

The sedentary Vlaks seem to be fully sensible of the advantages of education. In every central village a school is maintained at the expense of the community. The course of instruction embraces modern Greek, reading, writing, and the first rules of arithmetic. As regards Greek, in the towns and

large villages it has almost quite superseded the native dialect ; it is gradually gaining ground in the remote villages, and it is quite familiar to those nomades who in winter descend with their flocks to Greek-speaking districts. The *Αλβανιτόβλαχοι*, *Albanitoblachi*, speak a corrupt patois of mingled Greek, Vlakh, and Albanian, or rather, perhaps, of Vlakh and Albanian, and their common appellation of *κουτζόβλαχοι*, *cutzoblachi* (lame Vlaks), has reference, not to any defect of limb, but to the uncouth stumbling jargon in which they express themselves. The educated Vlakh is almost invariably distinguished by the grammatical accuracy and correct pronunciation with which he speaks Greek.

The solicitude of the Vlaks in respect to education is still unhappily confined to the male sex. The Vlakh woman is treated as an inferior being, and from early years she is habituated to drudgery and toil. By her all the out-door work is performed of gardening, tillage, sowing, reaping, carrying, storing, etc.; she must go to the distant forest, cut her load of wood, sixty or seventy pounds weight, and fetch it home as best she can, over miles of breakneck country. All the household work devolves upon her, in addition to which she must spin, knit, and weave. I know not if the poor toil-worn creature has sensibility enough to be proud of her handywork, for her blankets, rugs, stockings, cloths and carpets, are superior to all others made in the country.

The Vlakh woman is naturally handsome and robust, but her beauty is marred by early toil ; she soon becomes coarse, and hard usage anticipates the effects of old age. Having no idea of existence without labour, when the season precludes work at home, she seeks it elsewhere, not as an in-door servant, but as a ready hand for rough, out of door jobs of every kind. Numbers of Vlakh women come every autumn to Janina, where they contend with the Jews as street porters.

The aptitude of the Vlaks for industrial pursuits has already been adverted to. I would only add that they are generally in good repute as carpenters, builders, and masons. The best *sarukhas*, or country shoes, are made by them. They endeavoured to rival the Greeks of Janina in embroidery, and they imitate, but do not equal, the Konitziotes in wood sculpture.

The Vlaks are plain in dress ; many of those who are in easy circumstances have adopted the western fashion ; for with them, as with most others in Turkey, the "frock coat and trowsers" style is regarded as the emblem of Frank civilisation. But the common dress consists of a shirt and loose breeches of coarse white woollen cloth, a black sleeveless tunic, and the heavy goat's hair *kappa*, which is an ample protection against

wet and cold, and, winter and summer, is the only covering at night. A whitish conical felt cap and *saroukhas*, or else sandals of untanned hide, complete the dress. The better sort of persons, who retain the old-fashioned dress, replace the felt cap with a red fez, and indulge their tastes in shirts of better material and workmanship, in tight-fitting gaiters, and in a more expensive kind of tunic. The shepherds, from the dark colour of their capes, are commonly called *καραγουνίδες*, *caragunides*; let me here add that they are also named *πίστικός*, *pisticus*, from their known fidelity.*

The dress of the women is coarse, plain, and unbecoming in the extreme. It is said that in former times they were restricted by sumptuary laws from everything in the way of ornament or variety. As it is, their clothing is of the same material as that of the men, and in cut differs from it only in a scant petticoat, open half way up the sides to admit of freedom in walking. The gayest part of the dress are the stockings, which are of worsted, curiously wrought in horizontal stripes of different colours. Their only ornament is a *καμέρι*, *cameri*, or waist clasp, which is generally of imitation silver, and is sometimes extravagantly large, and on festal occasions the young unmarried women are allowed to decorate their heads with as many coins as they can procure.

Like all other pastoral tribes the Vlaks have their music; and their favourite instrument is a pipe, *φλογέρα*, *phlogera*, made from the wing bone of the vulture. This pipe is open at both ends, and is pierced with six holes, all on the same side; it has no mouthpiece, and for an unpractised person is very difficult to fill. The player inserts the end into the *side* of the mouth, and produces notes which may be varied from sharp and shrill to soft and pleasing. The nomade Scythians of old used to play on a similar instrument. Its wild, irregular music seems to belong to antiquity; and, heard amid the shady solitudes of Pindus, it recalls the hoary times of dryad, faun, and satyr.

Amongst the various nationalities of Epirus, I consider the Vlaks entitled to the foremost place. If inferior to the Greeks in 'cuteness, they are their masters in foresight, perseverance, and application. Reverting to their antecedents, a change of circumstances wrought a corresponding change in their pursuits, and by diverting their energies into new channels, remodelled their character, and converted the wandering barbarian into a peaceful citizen. But the lineaments of the old Vlakhs are not yet lost among his nomade descendants: though

* Not from any special fidelity. *Πίστικός*, or "confidential man" is, next to *tchoban*, the common Greek word for shepherd nowadays. [S.]

quiet and inoffensive as a rule, when roused to action they give proofs of great daring and enterprise. In physical strength and patience of fatigue they are second to none ; they are much feared as brigands ; and in estimating the chances of a struggle in these parts, the mountaineers of Agrafa figure conspicuously in the account.

Of the future of these tribes it would be difficult, in the present state of things, to hazard a prophecy. There are forms of government which tend to perpetuate disunion and conditions of society which are opposed to the fusion of different races. Where such is the case an exclusive jealousy reciprocally prevails, and progress and civilisation are checked in their growth. But should the ardent aspirations of the Pindic Vlach ever be realised, should he ever know the blessings of enlightened government, the invigorating influence of well-balanced freedom, the stimulus of encouragement, the assurance of impartial law and the confidence of protecting justice ; should he ever be placed in this happy condition, he cannot fail, in the development and well-directed exercise of his attested energies, to attain a forward place in the pursuits of civilised life.

SUPPLEMENT.

The Vlach shepherds are of two classes, namely, the hired shepherd and the nomade, who is an independent flockmaster. The Albanito Vlaks are all nomades, and dwell in tents. The hired shepherds belong respectively to the communities that employ them. An active man of this class can look after as many as three hundred sheep. He is paid sometimes in money, sometimes by a share in the flock. When in money, besides a daily ration of bread, or an equivalent allowance, he receives two piastres (fourpence) a head for the period of his contract when it is for six months, and in proportion for a longer or shorter term.

In summer the shepherds wander with their charges over the mountains, keeping each within prescribed bounds. Early in October they begin their gradual migration to the plains, descending from level to level as urged on by the increasing cold behind them. Those of Calabrites and its dependencies make for the coast pastures opposite to Corfu ; those of Met-zovo and Aspropotamus to the plains of Tricalla ; those of Zagori to the plain of Arta ; while the southern Dessarets descend to the valley of the upper Vistritza (Haliacmon), and the northern to the plains about Kortza and the upper Devol. In these migrations the shepherds are accompanied by their lares and penates, by their wives, families and priests, and by num-

bers of large dogs, commonly called molossian, although that celebrated race is, I believe, to be found in its purity only with the Dessarets about Mount Smokka. In May commences the return to the mountains.

A FEW VLAKH WORDS.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Vlakh.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Vlakh.</i>
God	Dhomne-zéu	Dog	kanè
The sun	soäre-le	Ox	boü
The moon	luna	Month	messä
Heat	kaloäre	Son	chiliu (filium)
Rain	ploaie	Daughter	chilia (filia)
Snow	niao	Tongue	limba
Man	omu		
Woman	muliara	I do	faccu
Hand	mäna	Thou doest	fatsi
Blood	sündza	He does	fatsè
Head	kapu	We do	fatsiamu
Sheep	oae	Ye do	fatsetse
Horse	kallu	They do	fatsoü
